RDS Center E-Newsletter

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Useful Links:

RDS Center
The home page for the RDS Center web site
http://rds.cms.hhs.gov

CMS Coordination of Benefits/VDSA Web Site
The home page for information on submitting retiree files through the Voluntary Data Sharing Agreement
http://new.cms.hhs.gov/Employer Services/03_EmployerVDSA.asp

CMS Employer Page
A page on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Web Site specifically for employers
http://www.cms.hhs.gov/ EmplUnionPlanSponsorInfo/

Contact Us

http://rds.cms.hhs.gov

(877) RDS-HELP or

(877) 737-4357

(877)RDS-TTY0 or

(877) 737-8890

Welcome to the RDS Center E-Newsletter

The RDS Center is please to introduce the first RDS Center E-Newsletter! In an effort to continue to share with you the most up to date information about the RDS program, we intend to distribute an E-Newsletter approximately once a month. In the E-Newsletter you can expect to find information on current RDS "hot topics", references and links to detailed sources of information, and other valuable information to assist you as you work with the RDS Center. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make this E-Newsletter a valuable tool. We welcome your suggestions and feedback through Customer Service.

Resource Reminder:
RDS Call Center & RDS Web Site

Do you have questions about the RDS Program? Not sure where to go to have them answered? Good news – help is available! The RDS Program has multiple resources that you can turn to for answers to your questions.

The RDS Call Center is an excellent resource for the most up to date information on the RDS program. You can reach the RDS Call Center by dialing (877) RDS-HELP, or (877) 737-4357. TTY for the hearing impaired is available by dialing (877) RDS-TTY0, or (877)737-8890. The RDS Call Center is source for general information about the RDS Program. You can easily navigate through the Interactive Voice Recording (IVR) to receive information about the RDS Program, upcoming RDS events, information regarding the RDS application and deadlines, information regarding the Secure web site user roles, and answers to frequently asked questions. The IVR is available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you have questions that are not answered by the IVR, you may speak with a Customer Service Representative (CSR). CSRs are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

In addition to the RDS Call Center, you may often find answers to your questions on the RDS web site. You can access the web site by going to http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/. On the web site you will find detailed information about the application process, answers to frequently asked questions, upcoming RDS events, and source material for the legal and regulatory authority for the

RDS Program. If you still have questions that have not been answered you may submit your question in writing via the web site. To do so simply follow these steps:

1. Click on "Contact Us" from the menu bar at the top of any page on the RDS Center web site.
2. Go to the second item on the list of option, "E-mail **RDS** Help Line," and select rds@cms.hhs.gov. This automatically opens your e-mail client with the "To" area already filled in.
3. Fill in the "Subject" area with a brief summary of your question.
4. Type your detailed question(s) in the area provided by your e-mail client.
5. When completed, hit the "Send" button.

New RDS Web Site Functionality

As the RDS Program continues to develop there will be additional functionality added to the RDS web site. We will inform you as new functionality becomes available through multiple mediums including listserv announcements, the RDS web site, and this E-Newsletter. It is critical to be aware of when new functionality becomes available so that you stay informed about the RDS Program.

As of Monday, August 22, 2005 at 8:00am, Plan Sponsors may use the RDS Secure Web Site to fill out, save, and submit their RDS online applications. Once an Account Manager has gone to the web site to obtain a login ID the RDS Center will notify via e-mail all Account Managers that have been approved for a login ID. This is the first required step prior to beginning the application process. Approved Account Managers will be able to register and submit applications for multiple plans. New Account Managers will also be able to register for their login IDs.

Future functionality will include the ability to change passwords, submit retiree lists, request an appeal, and make payments.

RDS Application Primer

Before beginning the application process at the RDS Secure Web Site, the Authorized Representative for a Plan Sponsor must select an Account Manager. You may obtain more information on the roles and responsibilities of the RDS Secure Web Site Users, by going to http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/how_to/apply.htm/#roles. Once selected, the Account Manager must visit the web site and follow the step-by-step instructions. For more detailed information about the RDS Application process, including the Retiree List File Layout, visit the "How to Apply" (http://rds.cms.hhs.gov/how_to/apply.htm) page on the RDS web site.

RDS Payment Update

The RDS Center is currently developing the requirements and specifications for the RDS payment process. Similar to the RDS application, the payment instructions and specifications will be published in the Federal Register with a public comment period. We will inform you of the publication via the RDS web site, the RDS Call Center IVR, a listserv announcement, and the e-Newsletter.

Helpful Tips

This section is intended to provide you with helpful tips about a relevant RDS topic. The focus of this first 'Helpful Tips' section is the RDS application.

- Only an Account Manager may create a new Plan Sponsor account.

- Only an Account Manager should use the "Create a New Account Manager ID" link on the public web site.

- The "Create a New Account Manager ID" should only be used once. After the Account Manager has created an ID s/he should use that ID to logon to the secure web site.

- The Account Manager can create new Plan Sponsor accounts once they have logged on to the secure web site.

- Regardless of how many Plan Sponsors they are working with, each Secure Web Site User may only have one login ID.

- Each Secure Web Site User may only serve in one role. (E.g. The Account Manager may not also serve as the Authorized Representative.)

- The retiree file layout PDF has been updated. http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicare/cob/default.asp